

Medical Officer's
 Report

ON THE
HEALTH AND SANITARY
CONDITION
OF THE
Urban District of Springhead
FOR THE
YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER,
1921.

LEES :
J. B. LORD & SONS, PRINTERS AND STATIONERS.

REPORT.

In accordance with the Memorandum issued by the Minister of Health a brief description of the physical features and general character of the district is required, though the following facts may seem superfluous locally.

The Springhead Urban District is situated in the western corner of the Saddleworth Union. On the north and east it abuts on the Saddleworth Urban District, while its western and southern boundries form the County boundary between Lancashire and Yorkshire. The County Borough of Oldham abuts on the north, and the Urban District of Lees on the south and centre. The district has a length of about three miles from High Bank Farm in the north to Holly Bank in the south, and its greatest width from east to west is about $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles.

Its surface varies from about 560 feet above sea level at the "Gardener's Arms" Waterhead the lowest point, to 1,196 feet near "High Lea Farm" the highest point.

The population is entirely scattered, the northern half is almost entirely agricultural, as is also the eastern half of the southern portion. The greater portion of the northern half of the district is within gathering area of the Strinesdale Reservoirs of the Oldham Corporation. The remaining portion is a manufacturing centre, with cotton mills, and centres of population at Waterhead, Austerlands, Den Lane, Springhead, Lydgate, and Quickedge.

Population at census of 1921, 4880, a decrease of 172 on the census of 1911. The estimated population at the end of 1921 is 5,060.

Births.

The total number of births registered in the district during the year was 117 of which 65 were males and 52 were females. Of the males 2 and of the females 3 were illegitimate.

This number was an increase of 20, as compared with the year 1920, and is equal to a rate of 23·1 per 1,000 of the population.

The birth rate for 1920 was 20·8.

The birth rate for the whole of England and Wales for 1921 is 22·4.

Deaths.

The total number of deaths registered in the district was 74—40 males and 34 females; giving a death rate of 14·6 per 1,000 of the population.

The death rate for 1920 was 14·5.

The death rate for the whole of England and Wales for 1921 is 12·1.

The Causes of Death are as follows :—

	Males	Females
Whooping Cough	1	1
Tuberculosis of respiratory system...	1	2
Cancer, malignant disease	3	3
Rheumatic Fever	1	1
Cerebral hæmorrhage, &c.	3	1
Heart Disease	9	10
Arterio-sclerosis	1	1
Bronchitis	3	3
Pneumonia (all forms)	2	3
Ulcer on Stomach or Duodenum ...	1	0
Appendicitis and Typhlitis	0	1
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	2	2
Congential Debility and Malformation, premature birth.....	7	0
Suicide	0	1
Other deaths from violence	1	0
Other defined diseases.....	5	5
	40	34

Infantile Mortality.

There were 11 deaths under 12 months of age as compared with 7 in 1920 giving a rate of 94 per 1,000 births registered.

The rate of Infantile Mortality for the whole of England and Wales is 83.

The following are the causes of death under 12 months :

Marasmus	2
Polio-encepalitis	1
Premature birth.....	6
Whooping Cough	1
Bronchitis	1

Sanitary circumstances of the district.

Water Supply.

Practically the whole district (with the exception of a small area in Strinesdale portion) is supplied with water from the Oldham Corporation and the Ashton-under-Lyne, Stalybridge and Dukinfield (District) Waterworks.

There have been no further developments during 1921.

Rivers and Streams.

The majority of streams in the district are polluted, but this will be remedied under the Sewerage Scheme.

Drainage and Sewerage.

The long contemplated sewerage scheme (begun in September, 1913, but delayed on account of the war) has been completed during the past year, and the outfall works at Two Bridges was formally opened on the 17th October, 1921.

The Sewers throughout the whole district have been laid (but as yet only a few properties have been connected). Borrowing powers have been obtained for connection to Sewers.

It is hoped the whole scheme will be completed during the present year.

Closet Accommodation.

Privies with open Middens.....	28
Number of Pail Closets	831
Number of Water Closets	19
Number of Waste-water Closets	7

Scavenging.

The whole of the Scavenging for the district is performed by contract, and on the whole is adequate. The Pail Closets and Ash Bins are emptied weekly.

Nuisance Inspections.

The total number of inspections made in 1921, 139.

102 Informal Notices have been served of which 101 have been complied with.

3 Statutory Notices have been served, 3 of which have been complied with.

Total number of Nuisances in hand at close of 1920.....6

Total number of Nuisances in hand at close of 1921.....1

Total number of Nuisances reported during 1921.....102

Total number of Nuisances abated during 1921.....107

No Summonses or other legal proceedings.

There are no Common Lodging-houses, Canal Boats, or Knackner's Yard, and no Offensive Trades in the district.

Schools.

Visits to Schools by M.O.H. are made as occasion arises. Disinfectants are supplied to all schools in the district for systematic use. The Sanitary conditions and Water Supply to the Schools are satisfactory.

Medical Inspections of School Children is carried out by the County Medical Officer (and his assistants) who is the School Medical Officer for the district.

The District Nurse, acting as School Nurse under the County Council, visits regularly all the schools in the district and has also paid the following visits :

Tuberculosis 200 ; Health 1565 ; Schools 45 ; Homes 39.

Milk Supply.

Complaints of dirty milk have been notified—3 samples taken but no adulteration found. No cases of disease have been attributed to milk in 1921.

Veterinary inspection of dairy cows to be made in cases suspected by M.O.H. to be tubercular. There are 32 Cow-keepers in the district, of which 26 are registered, and 75 Cowsheds, to which 69 Inspections have been made during 1921. 29 of the Cow-sheds are in good condition, 44 are fair and 2 are bad.

Very few of the Cow-sheds classified, as in good condition, come up to my ideal of what they ought to be; There is much room for improvement in the best of them.

Approx. number of Milch Cows in the district 349.

Other Foods.

There have been no samples of food taken for examination under Food and Drugs Act.

There are four Slaughter-houses in the district which are all registered. These are all old fashioned.

No prosecutions have been made *re* (a) Food and Drugs; (b) Unsound Food; (c) Slaughter Houses.

Housing.

I.—HOUSING.

(1)—Total number of houses 1297.

Number of working classes 1189.

(2)—Population. Estimated for 1921 is 5060.

(3)—(a) Shortage of houses.

(b) It is proposed to build 48 new houses, all of which will have 3 or more bedrooms.

II.—OVERCROWDING.

- (1)—Extent; 28 houses occupied by 261 persons.
- (2)—Causes; Shortage of houses and objection of property owners to letting houses to large families.
- (3)—Measures contemplated to overcome overcrowding: erection of new houses.
- (4)—No particular action taken against overcrowding during 1921.

III.—FITNESS OF HOUSES.

- (1)—(a) General Standard: One-half of the houses in the district are below Ministry of Health's standard.
(b) General character of defects :
 - No separate yards.
 - No through ventilation.
 - Back to earth causing dampness.
 - Flagged Floors causing dampness.
- (2)—No regular action yet taken as regards unfit houses.
- (3)—Difficulties in remedying unfitness: Cost of alteration would in many cases be prohibitive.
- (4)—Water supply, closet accommodation, and refuse disposal adequate.

IV.—UNHEALTHY AREAS.

No action yet taken on account of no provision being available for dispossessed tenants.

Factories and Workshops.

6 Smoke observations have been taken, 1 caution has been served but no legal notices have been issued.

Sanitary Administration of the District.

There is no Hospital for either Infectious Diseases or for Tuberculosis, but arrangements are made for treatment of Infectious Diseases at the Oldham Hospital when necessary, at the cost of £2 2s. per case per week.

A Joint Hospital Committee was formed before the War embracing Springhead, Lees, and Saddleworth, which had under consideration the question of providing a suitable Hospital for the district, with the necessary steam disinfecter and ambulance. As each year passes the need for such a hospital becomes more pressing, and it is to be hoped that the new Ministry of Health will shortly advocate the building of an Isolation Hospital for these districts.

Byelaws and Regulations.

No chemical or bacteriological work has been undertaken, beyond the examination of Sputum, Blood, etc., for purposes of diagnosis. Supplies of Anti-Diphtheritic Serum are kept at the Council Offices, for use by local practitioners

The following are in force in the district:—

New Streets and Buildings (P.H. Amendment Act, 1890, Part III).....	Aug. 11th, 1906
Part II	1907
Regulations under Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milk Shops' Act	Mar. 10th, 1907

Prevalence of and Control over Acute Infectious Diseases.

Total number of cases reported 47, as compared with 18 in 1920.

Scarlet Fever.....	5
Erysipelas	2
Diphtheria	1
Pneumonia.....	10
Chicken-pox	26
Ophthalmia Neonatorum.....	3

Chicken-pox (made notifiable on account of epidemic of Small-pox in neighbouring district) was somewhat prevalent during the months of February, March and April.

5 cases of Tuberculosis (under Tuberculosis Regulation 1912) were notified during 1921. Of these 4 were Pulmonary Tuberculosis, 1 of other parts. There is no Sanatorium or Hospital accommodation for these cases in the district.

These cases are visited by the County Authorities and are treated at the Branch Dispensary at Uppermill, or at one of the County Sanatoria. A weekly or fortnightly Dispensary in Springhead would be of great value to the tubercular patients residing in the district.

Means of Preventing Mortality in Childbirth and in Infancy.

Visiting under the Notification of Births Act is carried out by the District Nurse (Springhead Nursing Association) acting under instructions from the County Medical Authorities.

Factories and Workshops.

Factories 16 ; Workshops 10 ; No. of Inspections 10 (excluding visits of M.O.H.) The Closet accommodation of these is satisfactory. Springhead Spinning Co. (Bottom Mill), Austerlands and New Royd Mills have been connected to the sewerage. The Fire Escapes are considered by the L.A. to be sufficient.

I desire to express my indebtedness to my predecessor Dr. Martin for his very valuable assistance in the compilation of this report.

W. OLIVER, M.B., C.M.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

WATERHEAD, OLDHAM,
MAY 10th, 1922.

